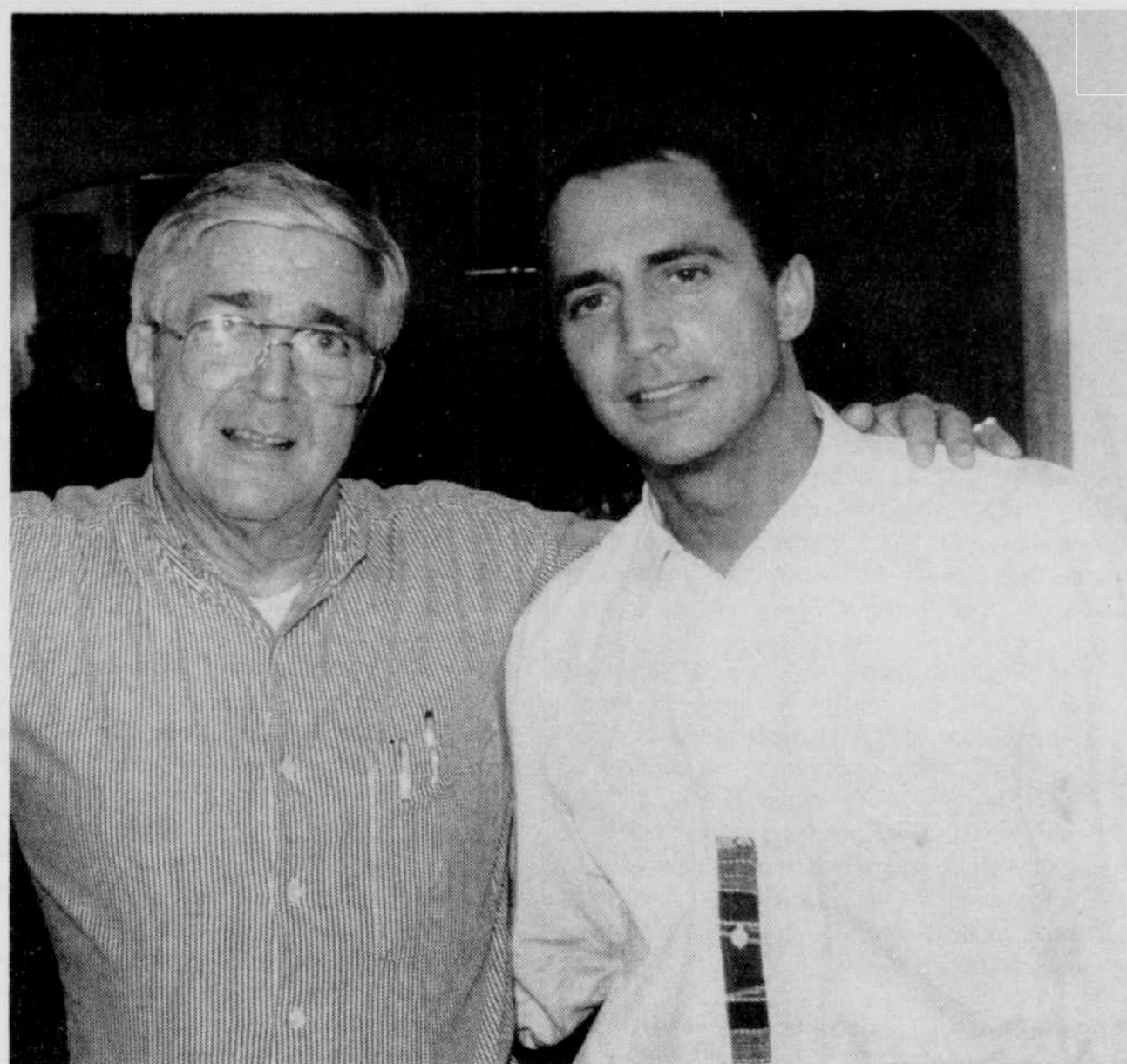




At the party: (left) Harry with his father, Peter Stein; and with his mother, Tessie Stein

AFTER THE PARTY

Continued from page 31

that cracked look that is so popular in homes now—Harry was doing that years ago. He was on the cutting edge."

Hassin, owner of Terraforma Building, adds: "Harry would draw a design and I would scratch my head and think, 'How the heck am I going to do that?' But in the end, it would get done. Harry taught me how to look at things differently, and to this day I take what I learned from him and apply it to what I am doing. I'm sure I always will."

Rose Hassin, a 70-plus woman who speaks with a heavy Viennese accent and now lives in Lake Oswego, was with Tessie and Harry Stein the day the brain scan was done.

"Tessie and I are like sisters. We did everything together. And Harry, I loved him so much. He was the best son. He protected her, took care of her bills. He never wanted her to worry about things," she says.

"I remember when Tessie was planning to move into a new apartment. Harry got four or five guys and they moved all of Tessie's stuff—without her knowing—into the new place. After work she went over to the apartment to kind of get a sense of what she would bring and how she would arrange things, and she opened the door and there was her new home, like she had lived in it for years. She didn't have to bother with moving because Harry handled it all for her—and there were fresh beautiful flowers everywhere. Harry was that kind of a person, that kind of a son."

According to McDonald-Lewis, when it came to intimate relationships, Stein "was not always an easy man."

"Harry and Randal were very different. [Kleiser] seemed much more conservative and quiet," she says. "But they were together for eight years, and I believe they were deeply attracted to each other, probably because of their opposite qualities. I think Randal was attracted to Harry's sense of freedom while Harry was attracted to Randal's stability."

"The two of them were confronted with a real crisis, and they reacted the way many couples would. I think we would all like to believe that our partner would stay with us through a crisis—whether we had cancer or whatever—but in reality, a partner sometimes bolts. It's very complex."

"I remember thinking about the naturalness of the party," recalls McDonald-Lewis, who says Stein was at her and Hassin's wedding in 1989, as well as their baby's naming ceremony. "It was superficial in the way that parties are, with small talk and chitchat, and yet it was different in that conversations would swing to why we were there,

second day of the event with her husband and young daughter.

"People were not in shock that he was going to kill himself," she says. "And there was total support for Harry's decision, but of course it was a little strange and sad.... I remember coming around a corner and seeing Tessie crying."

As in the film, there was music and food—lots of food.

"David's mother cooked and cooked and cooked," says McDonald-Lewis. "And Harry, I swear he drank gallons, probably, of scotch. Tessie was there and so was Harry's sister, Donna [played

One of Stark's last remarks before he drifts into death is "I love art."

"There's no doubt in my mind that Harry really said that," says McDonald-Lewis. "Harry did love art. He was an accomplished sculptor and painter. Art was always a major part of his life and who he was."

Other details the couple say the film audience should watch for include a scene in which some of Stark's friends are looking at a photo of a person totally wrapped in newspaper, sitting in a room plastered with newspaper, seen reading a newspaper.

In *It's My Party*, Margaret Cho, who plays a close cohort of Stark's, says to a puzzled friend: "It's called concept art."

Says McDonald-Lewis: "That's actually Harry in that photograph. He's the guy wrapped in the newspaper."

In the film, a piece of artwork hanging above the fireplace states, "Sit in Judgment."

"That was really in Harry's house," says David Hassin. "It was amazing to sit there and watch these details. Every couple of minutes Mary and I would turn to each other and say, 'Look at that, it's just like...'"

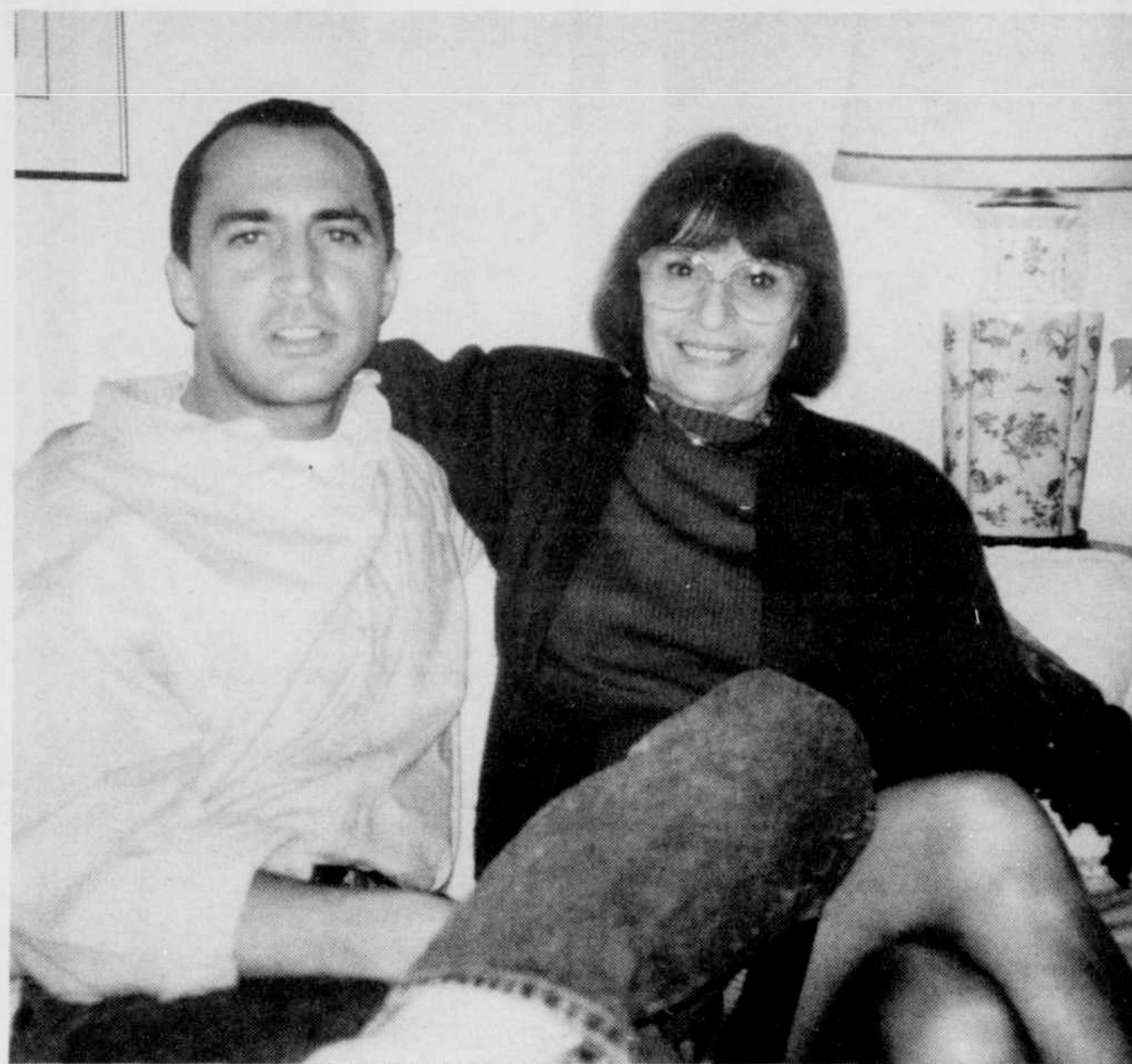
In the film, Stark has an alcove in his home where he has set up a shrine honoring loved ones who have died of AIDS-related diseases. Polaroid snapshots of dead friends are posted on the wall, surrounding a crucifix. Each photo has the name of the deceased scribbled next to it.

"Watch during one of the final scenes where [Stark] places a Polaroid of himself on that wall. The photo right above it is Harry Stein, and his name is written next to it," says McDonald-Lewis.

Just four decades old, Harry Stein successfully ended his life following his party.

"Unlike the movie, he didn't die at nightfall. He passed away around 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning after the second day of the party," says McDonald-Lewis.

"Tessie called me the next morning," says Rose Hassin. "She said, 'It's all over.' I went over to the house and everything had already been taken care of..."



Friends and relations Hollywood-style: (front row, left to right) Olivia Newton-John, Marlee Matlin, Margaret Cho; (middle row) Gregory Harrison, Eric Roberts, Lee Grant, Paul Regina; (back row) George Segal, Bronson Pinchot and Dimitra Arlys

which was to share our sorrow and grief with each other and to be with Harry and celebrate his life."

She says "the call went out" throughout Los Angeles that the party was going on, and the reason for it.

"It seemed like there were hundreds of people there," says McDonald-Lewis, who attended the

in the movie by Marlee Matlin]. Donna is not deaf, but she exudes that same fierceness and protectiveness that Marlee Matlin did on screen."

Both David Hassin and McDonald-Lewis, who went to see *It's My Party* when it recently opened in Portland, say the film closely mirrors the actual event.